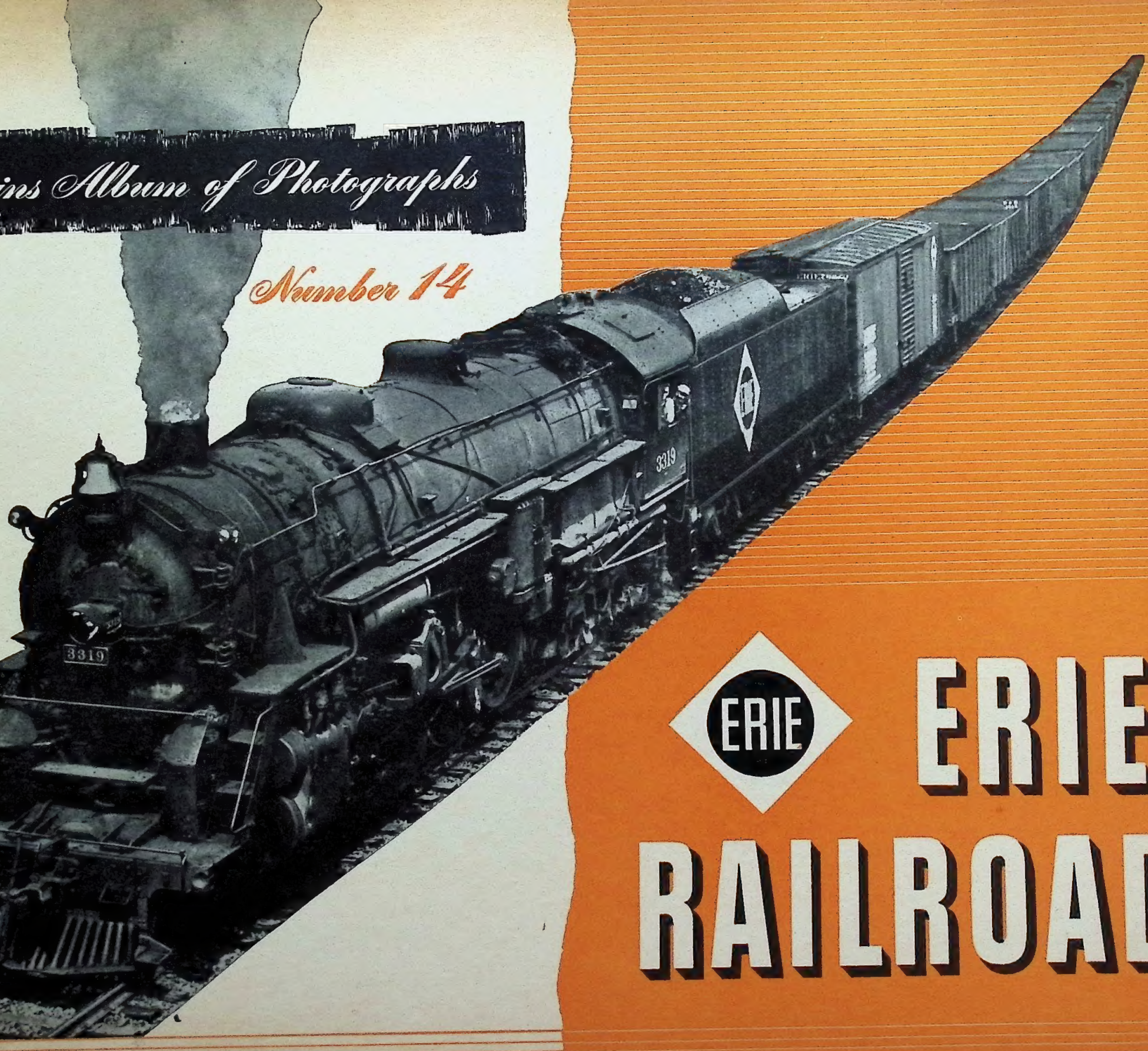
Trains Album of Photographs

Number 14



ERIE

ERIE RAILROAD

Trains Album of Railroad Photographs

Book 14

ERIE RAILROAD

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The Erie Railroad is best known as a freight railroad, yet its route offers one of the prime scenic rides in the East. The mountains of northern New Jersey, the valleys of the Delaware, the Susquehanna and the Genesee, and such historic structures as the great Starrucca Viaduct all contribute to the picture one sees from Erie windows during the wonderful daylight ride across lower New York state.

The trains upon the Erie are comfortable and homey, but they are neither the fastest nor the most frequent between East and West. Many a man who unquestioningly writes "Erie" upon his bills of lading rarely thinks of the Erie when he buys a through Pullman ticket for himself. He does not know what he misses.

For the Erie is really many kinds of railroad in one. It was originally built to six foot gauge and the resulting wide clearances make it a pre-eminent carrier of heavy freight. It pioneered in refrigerator transit and long years of experience has brought it the distinction of carrying 98 per cent of the western auction fruit into Manhattan. The Erie Limited, a recent (1929) entrant in the Chicago-New York field, is a through passenger train of comfort and the Atlantic and Pacific Expresses are heavy haulers of mail and express. In the suburban area of northern New Jersey the Erie is a transportation utility which daily carries more than 21,000 commuters.

This commuter train show is one of the Erie's best acts. The real show starts soon after four o'clock every weekday afternoon. Before the rush has eased some 50 trains have departed from Jersey City for the suburban towns nestled along the network of lines extending north and northwest. This demands the closest of timing and utmost of mechanical and human perfection in performance, for regularity is everything to the commuter. Erie maintains an on-time percentage of 99 in this critical field.

Originally the Erie did not even enter New Jersey. It was completed in 1851 as a strictly New York project, running across the southern tier of the state from Piermont, on the west bank of the Hudson just above the New Jersey Line, to Dunkirk on Lake Erie. Where bluffs along the Delaware and Susquehanna rivers forced the line to dip into Pennsylvania at two places concurrence of both the Pennsylvania and New York legislatures was necessary.

The formal opening trip, with President of the United States Millard Fillmore, the attorney general, the postmaster general, the secretary of the navy, and with Secretary of State Daniel Webster sitting on a rocking chair fastened to a flat car so he wouldn't miss any of the scenery, it was indeed a gala enough occasion to draw all the dignitaries Washington afforded. It was the first long distance railroad trip in the United States. Here was an entire railroad, the biggest in the world of that day, opened to traffic at once, not a slow growing project and not an amalgamation of many small and formerly independent companies. Gauge was not the only thing big about the new Erie.

It was inevitable that this railroad could not be confined to a single state. Acquisitions and agreements were made until the broad gauge lines connecting with the Erie extended way to St. Louis. The Erie itself went southwest only to Dayton, but after the broad gauge era a main line was pushed into Chicago. Branch main lines also put the road into Cleveland and Buffalo, which had so far outstripped the original terminus of Dunkirk. And along the main line the small towns which were hardly big enough to welcome the original railroad grew into cities whose names are familiar in our everyday life: Binghamton for photographic supplies, Jamestown for furniture, Akron for rubber, Youngstown for steel, Corning for glass. Salamanca, which did not even exist when Daniel Webster rode his flat car, is now a busy division point and junction.

The Erie has suffered much both financially and in reputation from the degradations of early and unscrupulous financiers like Daniel Drew, Jim Fisk and Jay Gould. Those days are, thank goodness, gone forever, and recent reorganization has left the Erie strong financially while aggressive and capable management has given it good reputation.

TRAINS ALBUM OF PHOTOGRAPHS
By the Editors of Trains Magazine

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Commuter train show just before evening rush when 21,000 suburbanites depend on the Erie to take them home. The 12-tracked waterside Jersey City Terminal is the eastern end of the railroad.

Another view at Jersey City looking west from the terminal. The station tracks converge into a four-tracked main line in the smoky background with two-way signals and three interlocking towers protecting terminal movements. Suburban trains of New York, Susquehanna & Western and New Jersey & New York also use the terminal. Photo by Noel Hiram Deeks.

This steel viaduct, looking toward Jersey City Terminal, carries the Erie's main line from Bergen Hill almost to the Hudson River. The Bergen Cut, in foreground, accommodates four tracks with two additional in a tunnel beneath and parallel to the main line. The subsurface tracks, used for freight, can be seen emerging at the left. Abandoned roadway of an electric line may be seen on right.

Powered by a well-kept Pacific the Erie Limited gathers speed while passing Croxton, N. J., on its 997-mile run to Chicago. A characteristic of the Limited and other Chicago trains on the Erie is the heavy head end business occasioned by large shipments of mail and express. Photo by Robert A. Le Massena.

This rebuilt and highly polished Ten-Wheeler eases 'round a bend at Pompton Plains, N. J., on its way to Jersey City. It is one of the many local runs carrying commuters on the New York & Greenwood Lake Division. The Erie operates a fleet of 55 commutation trains some of which go as far as Port Jervis, 87 miles from Jersey City. Photo by Theodore B. Keer.

Harriman local snapped by Donald W. Furler passing through Glen Rock. Note arched window on suburban type coaches typical of older Erie equipment, as are the Vanderbilt tenders. Commutation trains range from two-car gas-electrics to nine coach steam locals, carrying from 50 to 800 passengers. Most commuters reach Manhattan via ferry or Hudson & Manhattan tubes.

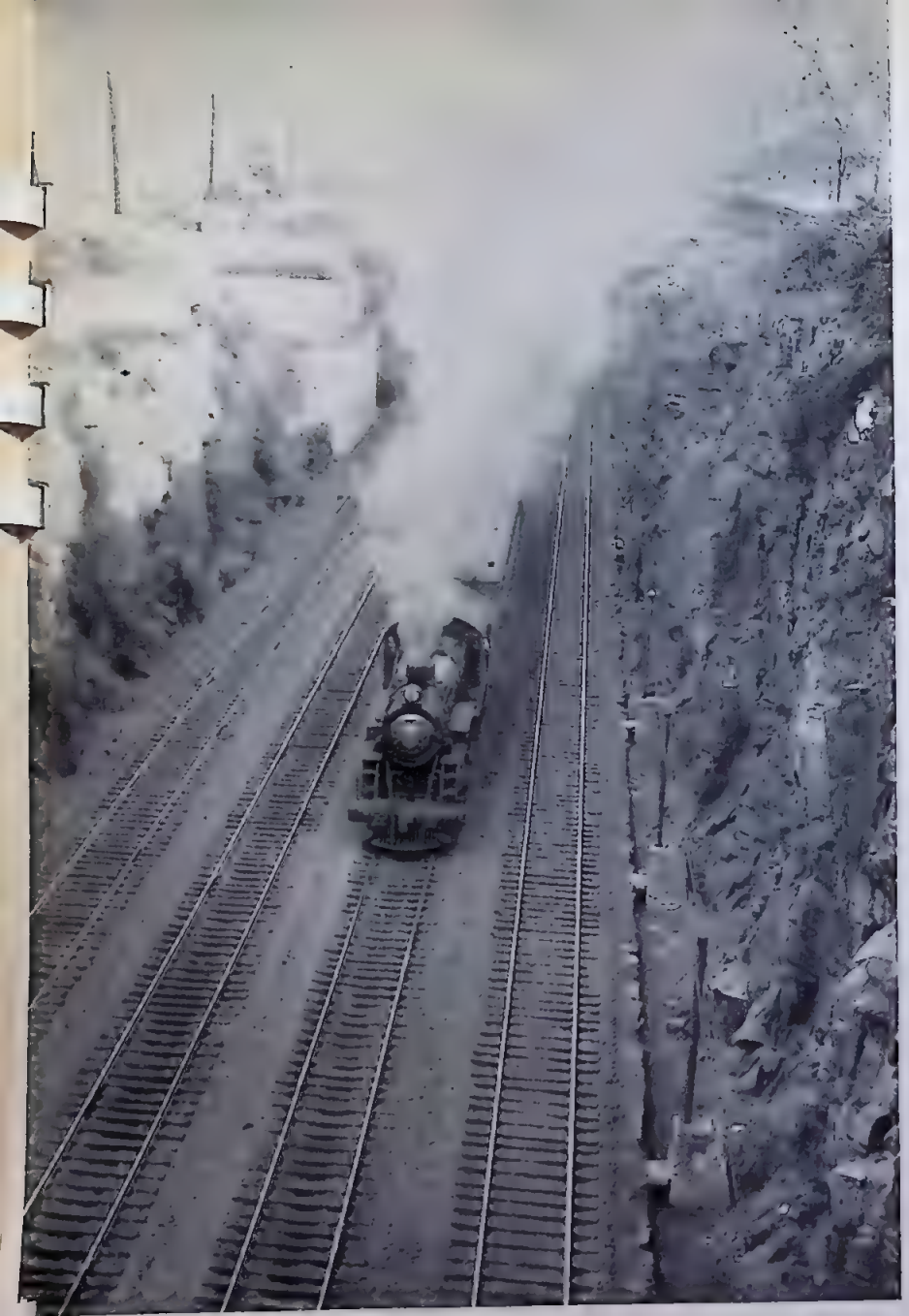
Eastbound No. 90 with a long string of mixed freight highballing through Glen Rock, N. J. Long mainline freights on the Erie have about 100 cars and not infrequently reached the 120-car mark during wartime. Taken by Donald W. Furler.

Midmorning local leaving Great Notch on its pleasant suburban run to Midvale on the New York & Greenwood Lake branch. In the foreground is the Caldwell branch track which leaves the main road skirting the Jersey hills on its way to Essex Falls. Photo by Kent Day Coes.

Erie action taken by Frank Quin of a fast freight speeding by suburban train at Suffern, N. Y., on its way to Jersey City. To handle dense commuter and heavy freight business the main line is four-tracked from Suffern to the Hudson except between Ridgewood Junction and Rutherford Junction where two double-track lines go through Paterson on the west and Garfield on the east.

With a full head of steam this Berkshire type locomotive rolls out of Maybrook dragging New England freight which has come from the New Haven via Poughkeepsie Bridge. Photo by Frank Quin.

Long Erie freight along the Delaware River near Pond Eddy, N. Y.



One reason why the scenery-minded elect to go over the Erie. This is the first view the passenger sees of the Susquehanna River which the railroad follows for a number of miles. In the picture westbound trains run from right to left as they follow the winding Susquehanna just before crossing the Starrucca Viaduct. Track in the valley is the Delaware & Hudson from Albany.

Second only to the Starrucca Viaduct as an engineering feat is the Bergen Cut. Hewed out of solid rock the road originally tunneled its way through; later an open cut directly above supplemented the bores. The present cut and tunnels accommodate six tracks, four in the open (except for some archways) and two underground — a curious yet efficient combination.

The famous Starrucca Viaduct has been carrying Erie trains for over 75 years. Photo shows double-headed freight going over the sturdy stone structure at Lanesboro, Pa. The bridge (1200 feet long and 110 feet high) was built by James P. Kirkwood, who later became superintendent of the road. It cost $320,000, the most expensive bridge in the world at that time. Photo taken by C. George Krumm.

Erie triplex locomotives were probably the most spectacular ever constructed. The Matt Shay and her two sister articulated compounds were built to eliminate pushers on the 1½ per cent Susquehanna grade over Starrucca Viaduct. Because of their slowness the triplexes were scrapped about 15 years ago.

Berkshire type freight locomotive, a modern efficient engine used in mainline service. The Mikado has largely been superseded by the Berkshire because the larger firebox and long combustion chamber provide greater horsepower for the eight-coupled locomotive.

Nestled in a beautiful valley among southern New York hills is Hornell, important junction and mainline division terminal of the Erie. Here the main line west parts company with the Buffalo Line, and here this engine terminal scene was taken. Much heavy car and engine repair work is done in the Hornell shops. Bill Stern photograph.

Diesel-electric locomotives are used on Kent and Mahoning divisions between Marion, O., and Meadville, Pa. This part of the line has roller coasterlike grades making it necessary to shorten trains at Marion or Meadville under steam operation. A single Diesel unit now pulls full length trains, saving much yard work.

Snow scene in the busy Kent (Ohio) yards. Because the Erie was originally of six foot gauge it has wide clearances and can handle freight not acceptable to other eastern lines. Scene above is at North Judson near Chicago.

New grade crossing protection on the main line at Decatur, Ind. The lower light facing reader has inscription "no right turn" which is illuminated when train is in sight and gates are down thus protecting main and side streets.

Electrician testing Decatur crossing gates and lights to see if they function correctly. This modern type highway protection is operated automatically by battery when train is approaching making crossing watchman unnecessary.

A typical winter scene on the Erie after a 10-inch snowfall. Yardman is about to throw switch and line tracks for freight movement. The rugged contour of the line in southern New York and in Pennsylvania accounts for deep drifts.

Eastbound freight leaving Marion, O., in early morning on Big Four tracks. Train is on stiff grade with rails sanded, booster in action and drawbars taut. Between Marion and Galion the single tracks of the Erie and of the Cleveland, Cincinnati & St. Louis run side by side and are used as a double-track line. Photo taken by H. W. Pontin.

To get into Chicago the Erie uses the tracks of the Chicago & Western Indiana, a terminal road, over which the Santa Fe, Wabash, C&EI, Grand Trunk and Monon also enter the city. Because of the many junctions and yards along the route it is aptly called the railroad wonderland of south-side Chicago. H. W. Pontin photo.

The Midlander, one of the Erie's three expresses between Chicago and the East, shown here as it gathers speed out of Dearborn Station on C&WI tracks. Taken by H. W. Pontin.